DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 362 370 RC 019 347

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TITLE Self-Determination and the Social Education of Native Americans.
REPORT NO ISBN-0-275-93776-3
PUB DATE 91
NOTE 243p.
AVAILABLE FROM Greenwood Publishing Group, 88 Post Road West, Box 5007, Westport, CT 06881 ($45).
PUB TYPE Books (010) -- Reports - Research/Technical (143) -- Viewpoints (Opinion/Position Papers, Essays, etc.) (120)

EDRS PRICE Document Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS *American Indian Education; American Indians; *Economic Development; *Educational Policy; Elementary Secondary Education; *Federal Indian Relationship; Federal Programs; Higher Education; Human Capital; *Public Policy; *Self Determination; Tribally Controlled Education; Tribal Sovereignty; Tribes
IDENTIFIERS *Native Americans; Tribal Government

ABSTRACT

This book is a critical analysis of the concept of self-determination as it has been developed in the federal government's American Indian social and educational policies since the 1950s. Analyses focus on the links between Indian educational policy and economic development concerns and on the ways in which the idealistic language of self-determination has tended to obscure political realities. Part I examines the roots of self-determination language in the practical and moral failure of federal attempts to terminate the trust relationship with the tribes. Economic self-help was seen as a way to train tribes for full participation in American life, thereby creating the human and material conditions for a justifiable termination. Part II focuses more directly on schooling and traces the development of the community control concept in various federal programs and legislation. It argues that educational self-determination mimicked in many ways the methods of economic planners seeking labor cooperation in nascent commercial colonies such as Puerto Rico. For example, the motivational utility of "maximum feasible participation" is best understood not as a commitment to community control as much as a method to secure the cooperation of a minority previously hostile to the prerogatives of development. Part III analyzes the dialogue of Native Americans attempting to reach consensus on issues of sovereignty related to education and development, and discusses whether or not self-determination is compatible with the federal-Indian trust relationship. (SV)

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